

[theme music begins]

Katie: I feel like there are two types of dolls. There are dolls you remember fondly, like the Molly McIntire American Girl doll I had as a child. Then ...

[record scratch]

[creepy, Halloween music begins]

Katie: There are the other kind of dolls. You know, the kind of dolls you see in antique shops or discover in your Grandma's attic. Ones like "Annabelle," the doll from the 2014 horror movie.

Katie: Now, imagine a group of the second kind of dolls -- the creepy ones -- lingering one floor beneath you when you're having a drink at a bar. Well, that kind of describes Hanny's, a bar and restaurant in downtown Phoenix. But only kind of.

[could transition back to regular theme music]

Katie: Welcome to Valley 101, a podcast from The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com where we answer the questions you ask about metro Phoenix. I'm podcast editor Katie O'Connell. I'm filling in as host for Kaila White, who is on her honeymoon. In today's episode, I'm looking into the basement art at Hanny's. And to start that story, we have to step back in time a bit.

[theme music fades]

Katie: Vic Hanny was the original owner of Hanny's. One clip in The Arizona Republic archives described him as a "popular and enterprising haberdasher." Hanny opened his dry-goods turned department store in 1912. At the time, it was located on Adams Street and Central Avenue.

Katie: The business evolved over the decades. It merged with another department store in 1939. And by 1946, its president Ben Projan was ready for it to grow.

[insert bouncy, 1940s music]

Katie: The plan was to build a new store at the southwest corner of First and Adams streets. Architects Royal Lescher and Leslie Mahoney of Lescher and Mahoney were hired for the project. The high-profile architects -- known for buildings like Phoenix's Orpheum Theatre -- brought a lot of attention to it.

Katie: The Arizona Republic chronicled the building's construction. [construction noises]

Katie: A photo from May 21, 1947 showed the exterior of the building coming together. The caption underneath touted the building's "more modern appearance."

Katie: Finally, on Friday, Nov. 21, 1947, it was time for the new shop to open. [champagne bottle opening, cheering]

Katie: Republic headlines celebrated the opening by saying quote, "It's Just like a Hollywood Premiere." 10,000 people attended. The mayor at the time, Ray Busey, said the new store's design was "a monument to the progress of the entire area -- not just Phoenix alone."

Katie: Indeed, the building was renowned for its International Style. Unlike the ornate, baroque style of the Orpheum, Hanny's was a midcentury modern building. There was a curved balcony on the second floor that offered views of shoppers on the ground floor. One of the exterior walls was curved too. It didn't look like any other building downtown.

Katie: And the department store opened at the right time.

Arizona Memories 1950s part 1 10:23 - After the limitations of the war years, people were eager to get on with their lives.

Katie: The era after World War Two saw incredible growth for the city, including its downtown. But that success wasn't permanent.

[sound of a record slowing down]

Katie: By 1986, the downtown department store closed. The building remained, but it had to *literally* fight through fire before it became an antique doll repository.

Rainy: [00:02:55] The department store closed and then the building was vacant for a number of years. And then the Phoenix Fire Department, actually the city of Phoenix, owned the building and the fire department used it for training for a number of years. [00:03:05][10.3]

Katie: That's Rainy Crump. She's the Vice President of Hanny's. She's also the daughter of the current owner, restaurateur Karl Kopp.

Rainy: [00:03:17]: We've closed off some of the areas for the third and fourth floor but there was a lot of stairways. So I feel like they probably put on packs and climbed stairs and stuff like that. [00:03:26][9.9]

Katie: Articles about the building's conversion talked about how the fire department used to light fires there as part of their practice too.

Katie: At any rate, Karl Kopp acquired the department store turned fire department practice facility in 2005. And if the name Karl Kopp sounds familiar, it's probably because he owns a few restaurants in different places, including AZ 88 in Scottsdale. And for my fellow Wisconsinites, he also owns Elsa's on the Park and Kopp's Frozen Custard.

music begins -- something like this

Katie: Karl Kopp would spend a whopping three years working on renovating the old Hanny's department store.

Rainy: [00:16:07] When we got the building, this was the shell. It was completely empty. [00:16:12][4.9]

Rainy: [00:06:12] And my dad is very meticulous when he designs of building and he wants to keep the integrity of the history. And so it's something that's really well thought out. [00:06:23][11.0]

Katie: To help him in this endeavor, Karl hired Scottsdale designer Janis Leonard. Janis was a renowned designer. Her work in restaurant design earned her a James Beard Award in 1996. And she'd previously collaborated with Kopp on the design of AZ88.

Katie: Three years later, in 2008, Hanny's reopened. And the work Janis and Karl did highlighted some of the 1947 department store attributes. Let's explore some of them, starting at the top and working our way down to the dolls in the basement.

change in music -- some '60s inspired Jazz?

Katie: The second floor -- or the mezzanine level -- still has a curved balcony that allows you to spy on people downstairs. It includes five booths that seat about six people each. On weekends, those booths are open to the public and there's a smaller bar up there too. Otherwise they're available for semi-private events.

Rainy: [00:17:09] It's just it's kind of a lounge cool vibe at night it's less hustle and bustle than the downstairs bar. [00:17:17][8.2]

Katie: It's worth noting that the mezzanine level is only available for semi-private events since the bathroom is also located upstairs.

Katie: And going to the bathroom at Hanny's is an experience. There are mirrors and bright-colored lights lining your way. The first time I went I was uncertain I was in the right place. It kind of feels like you've somehow become half an inch tall and you're standing in a pile of neon Legos. Local legend has it that the fitting rooms were once located there, but Rainy said that's not true.

Rainy: [00:15:53] So upstairs here was where the cashiers were because it was upstairs they paid. And downstairs is where they got fitted. [00:16:01][8.1]

Katie: Most of the action in Hanny's is on the first floor. When you walk in, the bar is the biggest thing that greets you. Once again, contrary to popular belief, the bar was *not* the original

makeup counter in the department store. Still, you can pull up a seat there and ask a bartender to make you one of their signature cocktails.

Rainy: [00:13:53] Our cocktails are probably going to be a martini any of our martinis are amazing or the kind of gone back old school to like the old fashions and the Manhattans. [00:14:03][9.9]

Katie: If you don't want to sit at the bar, tables and booths are neatly aligned behind the bar and to its sides. There's a ton of light throughout the restaurant thanks to the large department store windows. It reflects beautifully off the marbled tabletops, and it gives a regal look to the dark gray, almost black leather on the booths.

Katie: There's artwork that's original to the building too, like north wall's list of clothing designers in enormous block letters. And the south wall has a map of the world from the 1940s store. There's also the sign that says Hart, Schaffner & Marx on the balcony of the mezzanine

Rainy: [00:19:10] And then there's also that thing that was missing there was an F missing out of Shaffner and we left it missing because that's how we obtained the building. So we tried to keep it as original as we could. [00:19:21][11.2]

Katie: Janis Leonard even redesigned an elevator shaft. The fire department had removed the elevator from the shaft, most likely for repelling exercises. Janis added mirrors to the top and bottom of the shaft and plexiglass over the opening. If you walk out on the clear glass and look up, you'll see the image of your body repeated through the dueling mirrors' illusion.

Katie: Another item is bound to catch your eye: a mannequin in a glass case that's covered in beads and wearing antlers on top of her head.

Rainy: [00:11:36] My dad purchased it probably 30 or 40 years ago from an art dealer and she's been in storage until he brought her here. [00:11:47][10.9]

Rainy: [00:11:49] He was just waiting for the perfect spot to put her [00:11:52][3.3]

Katie: There are also six doll heads lining the buttocks of the mannequin. In a way, you could consider it a sign. Because the staircase that leads you to the dolls in the basement is located right behind that mannequin.

more ominous music begins

Katie: Rainy and I walked down the rounded staircase behind the mannequin. [sounds of steps around 21:08] Half-way down the staircase there's a singular antique doll standing in a window that provides a view of the basement pipes.

Katie: [00:21:08] I like that there's a ... halfway down the circular staircase. There's a preview doll in my glass. [00:21:13][5.1]

Rainy: Yeah, like, what's gonna go on?

Katie: Then you reach the bottom of the stairs, where you're surrounded by a chain link fence on three sides and above you. It's almost like you've stepped into a human-sized dog kennel with the door open. And across from you ...

Rainy: [00:21:57] Here are the dolls. [00:21:57][0.5]

Katie: [00:21:59] So, how many are there right now? [00:22:02][2.9]

Rainy: [00:22:02] I don't know. It fluctuates between like twelve to fifteen. 14 right now. So yes. And we have 14 of them right now. And the two little ones on the end were one disappeared and the other one we had a customer send us from Canada. And then we have a beauty queen in the middle that nobody's claimed her (laughs). [00:22:28][26.5]

Rainy: [00:22:31] Don't know where she came from. But. She's here. [00:22:35][4.2]

Katie: And that's par for the course. All but three of the dolls were the original ones.

Rainy: [00:09:13] So I'm sure some employees just stuck one down there occasionally. And we've had some leave that we didn't know how I got out and we've had some leave out the front door with staff chasing them. So when you give people alcohol they will do crazy things. [00:09:29][15.9]

Katie: The dolls vary in height. Most of them are antique, but the mysterious beauty queen is plastic.

Rainy: [00:22:46] The little tiny one is probably 18 inches. She's probably closer to three feet. [00:22:50][4.8]

Rainy: [00:22:52] Yeah they're just varied from big play dolls to a little bit they're almost similar porcelain so that we know they're real antique 'cause say they break fairly easy. [00:23:03][11.2]

Katie: The dolls are positioned on three sides of a rectangular table. And they're situated in a way that makes them look like they're *staring at you* under the light of a single, uncovered bulb.

Katie: Some say that the dolls look like the Last Supper.

Rainy: [00:10:37] It really isn't supposed to look like that. I think that's just what it came to look like. There was that the table that they're at is actually a door that was just left in the basement that was found. And so it was put up and then the dolls were just arranged. And that's how it

people refer to it as the Last Supper. I don't it wasn't intentional but it does look like it.
[00:10:59][22.3]

Katie: There's a collection of coins -- mainly pennies -- strewn across the table in front of the dolls. Rainy said the owners didn't start that trend. Customers just started tossing change on the table, although that can damage the porcelain dolls.

Katie: [00:23:04] I was gonna say the one that's in the middle the redheaded one in the middle you can actually see one of her fingers in the pile of money. [00:23:10][5.6]

Rainy: [00:23:11] Yeah. A lot of her fingers get you know she's only got I think four left. So a lot of her fingers are gone from the coins. [00:23:20][9.3]

Katie: And in case you're wondering, no, the dolls do not have names. Although some of them do have nicknames.

Rainy[00:25:10] The curly haired one. But a lot of them have curly hair. But I think they always refer to the one that has the crown of flowers on her head is the curly haired one or the one with the bow.

Katie: Seeing the dolls stirs a lot of emotions in people.

Rainy: [00:13:24] Whether it takes them back to their childhood, creeps them out, makes them feel religious, offends them because it's like the Last Supper. It runs the gamut of what the emotions can be from people. [00:13:33][9.4]

[kick creepy music up a smidge before fading out]

Katie: But knowing the background on the dolls makes them a lot less creepy, broken fingers and all. Rainy said the dolls weren't part of Hanny's when it first reopened in 2008.

Rainy: [00:09:46] I feel like we were here for about a year before it went in because my dad would have to see the place and let it wear on him to know what kind of installation he would want and where. So I feel like it was probably about a year into it before with the dolls appeared. [00:10:00][13.5]

Katie: And the dolls weren't meant to stay.

Rainy: [00:08:25] And it was supposed to be just to short you know three or four month installation to get people to kind of tour the building and see what was new in the basement. But it took on such a life of its own and it just stayed. [00:08:39][13.6]

Katie: The fence that separates you from the dolls? That was there *before* the dolls. The rest of the basement is used for storage. The wait staff at Hanny's keep their uniforms down there. And

Rainy said there's a lot of equipment in the back, so they installed the fence to keep anyone who wanders downstairs safe.

Katie: There is one oddity about the creation of the dolls. Much like the story that the present-day bathrooms were the fitting rooms, I'd heard that Janis Leonard -- the designer who revamped Hanny's -- was responsible for the doll installation. Rainy said that wasn't true.

Rainy: [00:07:58] No it was actually my dad came up with it. Sometimes I just don't know where he gets his ideas but he had the idea and he found most of the dolls just randomly his actually assistant in Milwaukee helped him but they located most of dolls there off of eBay and Craigslist [00:08:18][19.9]

Katie: I tried to verify this. Janis died in 2014 and I was unable to reach Karl Kopp, so I turned to our archives.

Katie: Janis was responsible for the art installations at AZ88, including the main installation over the bar. According to our archives, she would swap those out monthly. But our archives from 2009 and 2010 don't mention the addition of the doll installation at all. There's a clip from 2011 that said Janis was responsible for the art installations at AZ88 and Hanny's, but it doesn't specify which ones.

music begins

Katie: But that detail seems inconsequential once you're standing in front of the dolls. These days, Rainy said most people who frequent Hanny's know about the dolls. In fact, many patrons stop in to see them, having discovered them on social media.

Katie: I asked Rainy how her dad felt about the dolls' infamy. She said she'd never asked him, but she seemed certain of one thing.

Rainy: [00:13:33] So He's probably proud of it and he didn't have to come up with another idea (laughs) [00:13:38][4.5]

Katie: Well listeners, that's it for today. I hope this episode has made you want to swing into Hanny's to see the dolls. If you do that, be sure to snap a selfie and share it with us on Twitter @valley101pod. There's a chance your selfie could end up in our newsletter.

Katie: I'm Katie O'Connell, signing off for today. But I'll catch you next week when Valley 101 explores Phoenix's most haunted places.

Debe: [00:08:06] So they say her spirit still lingers in the hotel and they see her wandering the halls, smell her perfumes. So she's probably their most famous ghost there. [00:08:15][9.7]

music fades out